

# Rural Community Academy



## Parent/Student Handbook 2016-17

**Physical Address:**  
2385 N. State Road 63  
Sullivan, IN 47882

**Phone:** 812-382-4500  
**Fax:** 812-382-4055  
[www.rcsi.k12.in.us](http://www.rcsi.k12.in.us)

**Mailing Address:**  
P.O. Box 85  
Graysville, IN 47852

*This handbook is dynamic document and may be revised periodically.*



# **Topics A through Z**



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**Absences**

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*See Attendance*

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**Aims Web Assessment**

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The school is committed to assessment of all students to determine the success of our curriculum and the education our students receive. The assessment tool has three tiers. The students will be assessed a minimum three times a year and depending on the results the students will be placed in a tier. The higher the tier, the more intense intervention the student will receive. Students who fall in the second or third tier will have more assessments; however, they are short assessments. Students will be pulled from their classrooms to do these assessments with consideration given to the time away from the classroom. The AimsWeb assessment program, along with other assessments, including staff input, can determine if a child is at educational risk and the response to intervention is a tool to determine what the school is going to do about it.

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**Allergens or Irritants**

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Adults and students can have allergies. When an allergy is identified to a specific food or allergen, all staff is expected to be cognizant and to protect the student or the adult. For example, items that contain a food allergy will not be on snack list. Parent representatives will also be notified of a food allergy in your classroom so that food item will not be served. Allergens and other irritants will not be allowed in classrooms. At no time will the person who has the allergen or irritant be identified to other students nor parents as a matter of common knowledge.

Rural Community Academy is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for students. We understand the increasing prevalence of life threatening allergies among school populations. Recognizing that the risk of accidental exposure to allergens can be reduced in the school setting, RCA is committed to working in cooperation with parents, students, and physicians, to minimize risks and provide a safe educational environment for all students. The focus of allergy management shall be on prevention, education, awareness, communication and emergency response. A food allergy procedure is in place and will require the signature of the parent and the medical professional for life threatening allergens.

**Annual AHERA Notification**

Under the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) of 1986, Rural Community Academy is required to annually notify all school building employees, building occupants or their legal guardians, of the availability and location of the Asbestos Management Plan and of any post-response action activities, including periodic re-inspection and surveillance activities that are planned or in progress.

We are happy to report that our facilities have been thoroughly inspected and that there are no asbestos-containing building materials. However, State and Federal law requires that we notify you annually that we maintain an Asbestos Management Plan. The AHERA Management Plan is available for public review in the administration office. You are welcome to inspect and copy these plans during normal business hours. A charge of 20 cents will be made for each request page of the Management Plan. If you have any questions about our asbestos program, please contact Susie Pierce, Designated Person, for the school at 812.382.4500.

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## Assessments

Assessments are age appropriate and include Aims Web, ISTEP, NWEA, Star Early Literacy (K-2). The assessments help measure the students' progress and assess their needs.

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## Attendance

*See Illness, Extra-Curricular Activities*

School attendance is not only the law, but good attendance also helps ensure success for students and teaches them responsible behavior so that they become good citizens. Because our school is increasingly using a place-based curriculum, it is even more important for your child to be in attendance. Instruction from guest speakers and field experiences are impossible to make up, and this is the heart of our school along with teaching the fundamental state standards. A requirement for the school to achieve a passing grade on standardized testing is 95% attendance. It is imperative that students be present every school day. According to state attendance guidelines and the Child Protective Services, parents must receive a letter after every five days of absence for whatever reason.

## Absences

For any student who is going to be absent, the parents or guardian must notify the school and provide an explanation. The parents, guardians, or physicians must provide a written excuse within 5 days after returning. Students will be considered truant and the absence will be unexcused when no written excuse is provided. According to state and RCSI policy, absences excused include the following:

- illness of student
- death in immediate family
- quarantine
- education day at State Fair
- page in the General Assembly - 1 day
- medical, dental, and/or clinic appointments (when an appointment referral from the doctor is returned to the school)
- exhibiting projects at State Fair
- field trips
- funerals of persons not in immediate family
- short vacations with educational value with father and/or mother (legal guardian) not to exceed five (5) days per year. All work will be made up before leaving and all graded work will be expected to be made up on a day-to-day basis once the student returns. Work that is not made up will receive a zero. An educational excuse requires completion of the form Vacation Field Experience with prior approval by the Chief Academics or Chief Operations Officer. Teachers will also need to be informed after approval. Upon return to school, the student will provide proof of the educational value and a written and/or oral report to the classroom teacher within three school days of the return from the vacation at the teacher's discretion.
- hospital confinement (non-emergency) such other good cause as may be acceptable to the School Leader or permitted by law

Students with an excused absence have twice the number of days missed to make up their work for full credit. Students who have an excused absence during a grading period and do not complete the make-up work will receive "0's" for the incomplete work. Any student who misses more than ten (10) days during a school year will be subject to possible retention and/or failure of subjects.

When a student has been absent for an excused or an unexcused absence on five (5) occasions, a letter will be sent to the parent. Letters will also be sent at intervals for every five (5) additional occasions.

- Any absence without a written excuse is considered an unexcused absence.
- Students may not get credit for work missed due to unexcused absences.
- A student is considered a habitual truant by the State of Indiana when he/she is chronically absent, by having unexcused absences from school for more than ten (10) days in one (1) school year. (IC 20-33-2-11)
- Parents and the school are legally bound to follow the Indiana Compulsory Attendance Laws.
- A letter will be mailed home to the parent when the child has missed five (5) days of school and each interval of every five (5) additional occasions. Administration may request a parent conference.
- Students who have problems with regular attendance may experience the following consequences:
  - the school leader may report to the Sullivan County Authorities and/or Child Protective Agency.
  - students may be restricted from participating in athletic teams and extra-curricular activities such as drama club, and/or attending after-school activities such as ball games and dances.
  - students who qualify for a driver's permit and or driver's license may lose privileges.

#### Attendance at Extra Curricular Events

An absence for any part of a school day without pre-approval of the school leader will result in ineligibility to attend any school related function outside the school day. (such as ballgames, programs, Eagle Club sponsored events). A student must be in attendance to participate or attend that evening's school sponsored activities. Students may attend an event outside school hours only with a doctor's excuse for an appointment for any portion of the day. Any student who has an unexcused absence during the school day will be asked to leave any extra-curricular activity in the evening.

#### Limitations on Physical Activity

If a child is sick or injured, please send a note explaining why he or she cannot participate in recess or physical education. Otherwise, we will expect full participation at all times. Children excused from P.E. will need a doctor's note after one week. Children are expected to participate in all recess and physical education activities and should be dressed appropriately according to the weather as many activities are held outside

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### **Awards**

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*See Incentives, Terrific Kids*

At the end of each nine-week period, students are recognized for the following awards:

Frequency	Award	Criteria
9-week	Eagle Endeavor	No discipline, no late assignments, passing all subjects, conduct B- or better
9-week	Bug Award	Go up; no down; same if all A's (sponsored by Kiwanis)
9-week	Perfect Attendance	No tardies, no early departure
Semester	Perfect Attendance	No tardies, no early departure
9-week	Honor Roll	All A's and B's
Semester	Honor Roll	All A's and B's
9-week	High Honor Roll	All A's and only 1 B
Semester	High Honor Roll	All A's and only 1 B
9-week	Straight A's	All A's
Semester	Straight A's	All A's
Last 9 weeks	Top ARs	Top Accelerated Readers

Last 9 weeks	Mathathon	Top Mathathon winners
Last 9 weeks	Spelling Bee	4 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Spelling Bee winners
Last 9 weeks	Spelling Bee	K-3 <sup>rd</sup> Spelling Bee winners
Last 9 weeks	K Graduation	Kindergarten graduates
Last 9 weeks	Presidential Challenge	Whoever earned the Presidential Award; student participation awards in classroom

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### **Ball State University**

BSU is the charter (contract) school authorizer for RCA who provides oversight along with the Indiana Department of Education and the State Board of Accounts

Dr. Robert Marra      Director, Ball State University Office of Charter Schools

Ms. Laurie Serak      Southern Representative, Ball State University Office of Charter Schools

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### **Behavior Expectations and Discipline Guidelines**

The safety of all students, volunteers, and staff is of prime importance at RCA. We will strive to maintain a safe and respectful environment through adherence to proper behavioral guidelines. We are cognizant that it is not fair to allow one student no consequences for actions while another receives discipline for the same offense. We will hold students accountable for their actions, and we ask parents to support the staff regarding behavioral issues. All students will be given a letter grade based on proper conduct and citizenship. For additional information see RCSI Policy STU 001 Discipline and Discipline Guidelines K-4th and 5th-8th and discipline flowchart. Before, during, and after school, at any school function, and during any field experience, each student will be expected to:

- Abide by Federal, State, and local laws as well as the rules of the school.
- Respect the civil rights of others.
- Act courteously toward adults and fellow students.
- Be prompt to school and attentive in class.
- Work cooperatively with others when involved in accomplishing a common goal regardless of the other's ability, gender, race, or ethnic background.
- Complete assigned tasks on time and as directed.
- Help maintain a school environment that is safe, friendly, and productive.

Depending on the intent, the severity, and the consequences of an incident, various forms of punishment and student management techniques will be used such as student conferences, supervised work detail, counseling, parent conferences, in-school detention, social skills work, loss of part or all of recess/social time, positive reinforcement, denial of participation in certain school events, suspension, and expulsion

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### **Beta Club**

*Also known as National Junior Beta Club*

Beta is an academic honors program with a strong emphasis on community service. Students in 5th-8th grade are awarded membership based on a 3.0 GPA, teacher recommendation, and commitment to at least 10 hours of community service.

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### **Board of Directors**

*See General Membership Meeting, Rural Community Schools, Inc.*

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### **Breakfast**

*See Textbook Fees, School Breakfast, Lunch and Milk*



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**Cafeteria Rules**

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*See Rules--Cafeteria*

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**Calendar**

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*See School Calendar*

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**Cell Phones**

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*See Electronics, Telephone Use*

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**Christmas Program**

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In the 1940's the school presented a Christmas Program that included the infamous Rhythm Band. The tradition continues as the "best program in Sullivan County" includes students and staff as they present various musical talents. The program has become so popular that there are two showings the day of the show—9 am and 7 pm. Come early to enjoy a truly wonderful program. Students may be required to wear something special—a hat, certain color of shirts, etc. In the event the required garment is not something that you can acquire, please contact the School Leader for assistance.

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**Class Parties**

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*See Parties*

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**Classroom Rules**

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*See Rules--Classroom*

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**Closing/Inclement Weather**

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Rural Community Academy is always concerned about student safety and especially during inclement weather. We know that parents will use good common sense as to whether or not they determine to send their children to school during a scheduled day and that is their option. RCA will be open on all regularly scheduled days unless closed or dismissed early by the School Leader because of an emergency or inclement weather. RCSI is an independent school corporation and is not included in the closings of other local school corporations. Remember that RCA buses do not travel on county roads that other corporations may feel put students at risk. The buses weigh 27,000 lbs unloaded and are the safest vehicle on the road as other drivers watch buses more closely. A discussion of indoor recesses can be found under Recess in this section. Breakfast will not be served when the school has a two-hour delay. Closings or early dismissals will be announced via various electronic means as soon as possible. We will be utilizing the School Reach program to send messages directly to your home and cell phones. Text alerts are available at [www.wthi.com](http://www.wthi.com) or please watch WTWO or WTHI for pending delays or closures.

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**Contact Us**

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*Email firstnamelastinitial@rcsi.k12.in.us*

*Example: leonad@rcsi.k12.in.us*

Mrs. Susie Pierce

Mrs. Mandi Johnson

Mrs. Ginger Hathaway

Mrs. Tanna Jo Weszely

Mrs. Leona Davis

Mrs. Tiffany Migliorini, Kindergarten

Mrs. Cora Jo Gregory, Kindergarten

Chief Operations Officer/School Leader/Treasurer

Chief Academics Officer/Director of Special Ed

Exceptional Learner Teacher/Staff Leader

Chief Operations Officer/PE Teacher

Office Manager, Deputy Treasurer

Mrs. Tracey Drappo, Fifth Grade

Mrs. Abby Howard, Sixth Grade

Mrs. Melissa Miller, First Grade  
Mrs. Kristen Morse, Second Grade  
Mrs. Jennifer Gibbs, Third Grade  
Mrs. Terri Alexander, Fourth Grade  
Mrs. Kyndal Davis, Title I Teacher  
Mr. Tyler Nichols, Music  
Mrs. Susan Harris, Instructional Services  
Mrs. Jaime Crowe, Instructional Services  
Mrs. Kristie Bledsoe, Instructional Services  
Mrs. Tammie Padgett, Library & Instr Ser  
Mrs. Kim Smith, Instructional Services

Mr. Bob Evans, Seventh Grade  
Mrs. Kendra Jones, Eighth Grade  
Mrs. Ginger Hathaway, Exceptional Learner  
Mrs. Verna Metcalf, Food Services Manager  
Mrs. Laura Baker, Food Services Assistant  
Mrs. Nancy Monk, Custodian  
Mr. Brian Monroe, Bus Driver  
Mr. Robert Davis, Bus Driver  
Mr. Carl Melchert, Bus Driver  
Mrs. Cindy Cooley, Bus Driver  
Mrs Kim Compton, Instructional Services

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## **Curriculum and Instructional Methods**

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*See Place Based*

The word curriculum means “the subjects taught at an educational institution, or the elements taught in a particular subject” (Encarta Dictionary). What we teach at RCA is what the state of Indiana requires us to teach in math, language arts, science, and social studies, otherwise known as the state standards. How we teach our students the content and skills is up to us. We have chosen to use what is called a place-based approach and have given our staff materials and tools to use to be sure that our students have a solid foundation.

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## **Daily Planner**

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*See Homework*

Please check your child’s folders and assignment planner daily! The planner is also considered another tool to communicate with the teacher and the teacher with the parent. It is the student’s responsibility to copy what the teacher places on the board as an assignment. Please require your child to bring home their planner every night so that you are aware of what homework your child has. It is important for students to create good study habits and learn to plan, to organize, and to carry out schoolwork. In order to keep organized and to learn good study habits, daily planners are required in grades 1-8. Periodically, the planner will be graded for completeness and that grade will become part of the student’s grade for work habits.

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## **Digital Images**

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*See Pictures*

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## **Discipline Guidelines**

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*See Behavior Expectations and Discipline Guidelines*

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## **Dress Code/Piercings/Tattoos**

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Rural Community Academy is concerned with the appearance of all students, regardless of grade level. All students grade K-8 should be attired in a way that reflects respect to themselves, their family, school, and community. Dress Code pertains to all grades including the primary grades. It is unfair to allow some students to wear sundresses and short shorts and sleeveless shirts while others are allowed to dress any way they want because they are younger. Students who do not abide by the dress code may be asked to turn shirts inside-out, change into clean extra clothing kept at the school, or call his/her parent or guardian.

Administration will determine any violation of dress code for students as follows:

- No Leggings as pants unless covered by appropriate clothing; no Pajama Pants unless PJ Day.
- No article of clothing may be worn that promotes the sale or use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or excessive violence.
- No chains hanging from clothing.
- Hats or sunglasses are not to be worn in the school building unless for a special occasion such as Hat Day or Sports Team Day.
- Clothing with logos that express suggestive or double meanings is not acceptable.
- Athletic tank tops and T-shirts with low cut armholes shall not be worn.
- No sundresses with open backs or shoulder areas.
- The torso of all students must be covered.
- No skin-tight clothing; no hanging pants below the waist
- No cleavage.
- Spaghetti straps, halter-tops and open backs will not be acceptable wear. Shirts must have at least a 3-finger wide band and cannot be cut in really far in the back revealing shoulders.
- No bikini tops under shirts where the bikini is visible.
- Appropriate clothing must cover all undergarments including bra straps. Bra straps are not clothing that should be shown as part of an outfit.
- Skirts and shorts must be modest in length. No short gym shorts. Students must be able to bend over with knees straight with nothing showing.
- Students may not change clothing during the day unless requested by Administration.
- No jewelry in any nose, eyebrow, tongue, cheek or mouth piercing.
- No visible tattoos. No magic marker, pen or pencil writing on body parts.
- No holes in jeans or shorts on high portion of thigh. Students will be asked to cover them with duct tape
- Staff and students will have to dress for the Halloween Parade and may not be dressed in costume all day.
- Do not dress for the sake of fashion as the outfit can be too short, too tight, too revealing.
- Nothing worn in the hair as a head dress that isn't an appropriate head attire.
- No glasses without lens and no fake glasses.
- No pajama pants, tops or house slippers. Students should be dressed not looking like they are coming out of bed.

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### **Drills**

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State law requires a fire drill monthly. State law requires a tornado drill two times a year. There is a chart of evacuation procedures posted close to the exit in each room An emergency evacuation drill will be conducted once a year. An earthquake drill is conducted once a year.

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### **Drinks**

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Students may drink plain (not colored or flavored) water in the classroom with an appropriate, enclosed container so that the damage from spills on carpet will be kept to a minimum.

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### **Drop Off, Student**

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*See Student Drop Off*

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### **Drugs and Alcohol**

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RCA will not tolerate the use or possession of alcohol or illegal drugs on the job or on school property. Every person using or possessing alcohol or illegal drugs on school property or while at work or who report to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs will be subject to the STU 011 policy. A

student in possession of, or under the influence of, drugs or alcohol can expect to have law enforcement to intervene and could be subject to severe penalty up to, and including, expulsion. For additional information, see RCSI Policy STU 011 Use of Drugs and Alcohol.

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**Eagles Club**

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The Eagles Club is the RCA Booster club and is a liaison between the parents and school administration. A board member serves at all of its meetings, which precede or follow the monthly RCSI board meeting. The Eagles Club also sponsors basketball, cheerleading, fund raising, and other activities. Each grade has a parent representative. The teacher will work with the parent representative for their class for all the holiday parties. The Eagles Club sells spirit wear. Staff can buy clothing for themselves at a discounted rate. The Eagles Club has a fundraiser in the fall. They will send forms home with the students. Staff is asked to help chaperone hallways and doors during the home basketball games. The Eagles Club sponsors the Neewollah Event, like a fall festival. The Eagles Club sponsors a portion of the field day that is the last day of the school year. All parents are automatically members and are welcome to attend meetings. Membership fees for community members, grandparents or others are \$5. Lifetime grandparents are \$10; lifetime others are \$20. Community members are also welcome to join and are encouraged to participate. Contact the school office for meeting times and other information.

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**Eagle Endeavor Award**

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*See Awards*

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**Electronics/Cell Phones/Toys/Cameras/Trading Cards**

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*See Telephone Use*

Valuable or sentimental personal items, including toys and any type of electronics, such as games or radios/CD or MP3 players and IPODS as well as digital cameras are not allowed. It is up to the classroom teacher to determine the appropriateness of toys for show and tell only; otherwise, toys are not allowed at any time. Please check backpacks before children leave for school. Children are not allowed to bring trading cards to school. Trading or selling of any item, other than fundraisers, is not acceptable on school grounds. RCA strives to maintain a violence-free community and toy weapons are not acceptable. RCA cannot be responsible for lost, broken or stolen items.

Students are not allowed to have or use cell phones during school hours. Students will not be permitted to bring cell phones to school unless the parent and student sign a Request to Bring Cell Phone, which describes why the student needs the phone and approval is gained by the school leader. Cell phones will be given to the bus driver to be held during the transportation of the student. Cell phones must be brought immediately upon arrival to the office for safekeeping and may be retrieved after school is dismissed.

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**Email**

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*See Internet Access, Technology, Contact Us*

Communication between parents and teachers is essential. If a parent has an email address, please call the office and let us know. Staff will have access to be able to contact you if a concern arises. Parents can contact staff members as described:

Staff members email addresses include *firstnamelastinitial@rcsi.k12.in.us*

*Example: leonad@rcsi.k12.in.us*

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**Excused Absences**

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*See Attendance*

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## **Extra Curricular Activities**

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Boys and Girls Basketball for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade competition can include 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders. Girls can play on the boys' team but boys cannot play on the girls' team. Cheerleaders consists of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade girls and boys. The Junior High Dance Team of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders includes both boys and girls. Archery is available to all students in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Beta Club is available to all students who meet the academic and character requirements. Participation in all extra-curricular activities requires a weekly progress report completed and turned in to the office on Mondays. All classes must be passing. Due to confidentiality laws, administration will give a list of names to the appropriate coach to determine who may not participate.

An absence for any part of a school day without an excuse will result in ineligibility to attend any school related function outside the school day (such as ballgames, tournament, programs, Eagle Club sponsored events). A student must be in attendance a full school day to participate or attend that evening's school sponsored activities. Students may attend an event outside school hours only with a doctor's excuse for an appointment for any portion of the day.

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## **Field Experience**

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Field experiences are an extension of the classroom at RCA and accordingly will be considered as an integral part of each student's learning experience. Any student who does not participate will be required to complete an alternate assignment related to the field experience.

All children are required to turn in a field- experience permission form to take part in an approved walking field trip. This permission form is valid for the entire school year.

All children are required to turn in a field experience permission form to take part in an approved non-walking/vehicular field trip. Each non-walking field trip will require a new permission slip. IF a student doesn't turn in permission slip to go, then the student is required to attend school. The student will complete work including an essay about the subject matter he/she is missing by not attending the field experience. This is grade work.

Only students in that specific classroom are eligible to take the trip. In the event a parent accompanies a student on his/her field trip, no other children including siblings are allowed on field trips since that parent will be considered a chaperone. With up to 19 students in a class all chaperones will need to concentrate on the behavior and welfare of other children. All chaperones will abide by the Chaperone Guidelines described below.

Whenever a bus is provided by RCA for a field experience ALL STUDENTS MUST RIDE THE BUS to and from the destination of the trip. Adult chaperones may be limited in number and chaperones will be joining the trip based upon input from the teacher. If there is room on the bus, adult chaperones may ride the bus. If not, other arrangements can be made among those adults attending the field trip.

The day of the trip, every volunteer driver, parent or staff, must show the office their valid driver's license and current proof of insurance before leaving on the trip. If the same person volunteers to drive the next trip they will be once again required to supply these documents to assure students are traveling with an adult that has a valid driver's license and current insurance information. This is a requirement of our insurance company.

Our school is dependent on the support of parents and community members to make these trips possible. Children riding with chaperones need to wear seat belts or be in booster seats (until over 80

pounds, 4'9" tall and between 8-10 years of age) and sit in the back if the car has an airbag. All chaperones are expected to follow our chaperone guidelines.

### Chaperone Guidelines

RCA truly appreciates the sacrifice that you are making to be a chaperone. Your involvement is critical in supporting the school's mission. In order for our students to be able to get the most benefit from their field trip experience in the safest way possible, we ask that:

- You make sure to have current insurance information and a copy of your valid driver's license on file in the office. A current copy of insurance information and your driver's license must be presented to the office before leaving on a field trip every time you volunteer in a driving capacity.
- If you are driving, we reserve the right to inspect your vehicle for safety issues.
- You notify the teacher as soon as possible if circumstances will prevent you from chaperoning or driving.
- You arrive to the school at least 10 minutes prior to departure time.
- You carry a cell phone if you have one and make sure to exchange numbers with the teacher.
- You refrain from smoking in the vehicle or using alcohol or tobacco products while children are in your care.
- You follow the seatbelt requirements printed in the RCA parent/student handbook.
- You listen to appropriate (G-rated—not PG) music or films while RCA students are in your vehicle.
- You make sure that the children in your care are dressed appropriately at all times. For example, make sure that if it is cold outside that they have their coats fastened shut and are wearing gloves and hats/hoods.
- You keep the students that you are responsible for in close proximity of you.
- You have a positive attitude, are supportive of the teacher, and be respectful of presenters.
- Primary children (K-2) are not allowed to go to the bathroom by themselves. They must be accompanied by an adult.
- Older students go to the restroom in pairs.
- Do not use your own money to buy the students anything.
- Realize that the teacher is in charge and is required to enforce school rules of behavior to students at all school-related functions and field experiences, even if the parent is present.

It is so important that everyone follow these guidelines because other parents are trusting us with the welfare of their child(ren). Field trip driving is one way to meet parental obligations for school volunteer service.

### Expected Field Trip Behavior

Students are expected to behave in the same manner as they would within the classroom. Due to the nature of field trips and the interaction that will occur with community members and others, students are expected to be respectful at all times. If there is a problem with a student misbehavior or disrespect, there will be a conference to deal with the behavior. If the behavior continues or repeats on other field trips, field trip privileges will be revoked for a period of time and the student will be required to be at school and participate in some kind of research and report or textbook experience on the subject to be covered. . Due to the nature of our curriculum, exclusion from field trip learning experiences may seriously impact a child's learning experience. If students can not behave in the classroom, then the administration along with the teacher can make the decision for the student not to attend the field experience or require a parent to attend for the student to go.

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**General Membership Meeting**

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*See Rural Community Schools, Inc.*

Parents are stakeholders in the school and have a voting right to elect RCSI Board Members. Every parent of the Rural Community Academy is also automatically a member of the Rural Community Schools, Inc. They are always welcome to the regular Board meetings and especially encouraged to attend the General Membership Meeting. Other interested community members, grandparents or others may apply for membership. Applications for membership may be picked up in the school office or at the school's website [www.rcsi.k12.in.us](http://www.rcsi.k12.in.us). Membership fees for these individuals are \$10 annually.

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**Grading and Report Cards**

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*See Parent-Teacher Conferences*

Students will be given a grade report every nine weeks. Parents do not need to sign the report nor return it to school. All core subjects will be given a letter grade. Students will also be given a letter grade in the area of citizenship and conduct.

If parents have any questions or concerns, they can contact the student's teacher. Email is a good way to correspond with teachers. The email address for all RCA staff is their first name plus their last initial followed by @rcsi.k12.in.us. ([johns@rcsi.k12.in.us](mailto:johns@rcsi.k12.in.us)). However, if email is not convenient for you, please feel free to call the office anytime.

Students in grades 3-8 will be eligible for Honor Roll with the following qualifications:  
High Honor Roll – All A's and no more than one B. Honor Roll – Nothing less than a B.

Grading Scale			
A+	100	C+	79-77
A	99-93	C	76-73
A-	92-90	C-	72-70
B+	89-87	D+	69-67
B	86-83	D	66-63
B-	82-80	D-	62-60
		F	59 and below

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**Graduation**

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As a child reaches the academic level of 8<sup>th</sup> grade and celebrates their accomplishments, everyone honors them with a ceremony in late May, just before school is out. Students are involved in planning the activities. Seventh grade students prepare and serve the refreshments while 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents enjoy the company of family. All graduates will make a presentation of their writing that is prepared in class expressing their experience at RCA and thanking those they wish to thank. This is a more formal event and dress clothes are required—dress slacks, tucked in shirts, blouses, skirts, dresses. Ties are not required but many do wear them. If a family does not have the proper attire and needs some financial assistance, contact the school leader. If a student shows up in inappropriate attire according to the school leader, they will be denied the opportunity to participate in the ceremonies.

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**Gum**

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It has been determined that students are immature when given incentives such as gum as their abuse has caused problems in where they discard their used gum. Therefore, students will not be allowed to check gum. Those students caught chewing gum will be given a discipline slip.

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**Harmony**

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*See School Web Site*

The school website has a link to the student management software called Harmony. As a parent you can utilize your assigned password for each child to check on your child's academic and behavior information. If you need a password, please call the office. Teachers are required to input academic information weekly so you can check often for academic inquiries. Behavior information is posted usually the same day or the next day unless more information is needed to investigate discipline.

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**Head Lice**

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*See Lice*

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**Holiday Market**

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This community event is a great time for the students, staff and community to come and purchase homemade food and gifts for the holiday. The event is organized by TTYF, but is fully supported by staff as class tables are set up to raise class funds.

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**Homework**

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*See Illness, Daily Planner*

Please check your child's folders and assignment planner daily! Special assignments, practice, and studying for tests require time at home for building skills. It is calculated that ten minutes of daily homework should be expected for each grade level (for example, K would be 10 minutes and 4<sup>th</sup> grade would be 50 minutes daily). It is important for students to create good study habits and learn to plan, to organize, and to carry out schoolwork. Homework provides a valuable opportunity for you, the parent, to review assignments with your child and make regular checks to ensure that they are completing lessons and to show the value placed on work well done.

In order to keep organized and to learn good study habits, daily planners are required in grades 1-8. It is the teacher's responsibility to check the planners to be sure the information is entered and is complete enough to get the work done—which is why all assignments need to be placed on the board for the students to copy. Periodically, the planner will be graded and that grade will become part of the student's grade for work habits. Staff will give extra time for completion of homework when a student has an excused absence—one additional day to turning homework for each day of excused absence. The same thing is true for unexcused work—doing the homework is what is important. The penalty for excused versus an unexcused work is that students whose work is unexcused gets only 50 percent credit once the homework is graded.

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**Illness**

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*See Attendance, Homework*

Because the health and safety of all students and adults is important at RCA, we stress that students who are sick should not be sent to school. Please keep your child at home if they have any of the following conditions: temperature of 99 or 100 degrees or higher, sore throat, earache, serious cough or cold, serious stomach complaints, or skin rash. When students develop these complaints at school, the office will contact the child's guardian according to current contact information on file. Please keep this contact information current by notifying the office of any changes in work situation, name, address, or telephone.

Students must return a student information sheet filled out and signed by the parent at the start of the school year. This is a communication tool to allow us to know if your child has an allergy or takes



prescription medications. All proper immunizations and physical forms must be on file in the office. Information and treatment regarding allergies and prescriptions medications will be provided to your child's teacher as well as to the office.

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### **Immunizations**

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Indiana law says each school shall require the parents of a child who has enrolled in the school to furnish *no later than the first days of school* a written statement of the child's immunization, accompanied by the physician's certificates or other documentation, unless a written statement of this nature is on file with the school. A child may not be permitted to attend school beyond the first day of school without furnishing this written statement, unless: the school gives the parents of the child a waiver that is not to exceed 20 (twenty) days; or the local health department or a physician determines that the child's immunization schedule has been delayed due to extreme circumstances and that the required immunizations will not be completed before the first day of school.

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### **Incentives**

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*See Awards, Terrific Kids*

The objective is to get students to learn. One philosophy is to encourage students to perform well academically or to exercise good character traits or to be at school versus admonishing them when they do not. Examples of areas for incentives include Attendance, Accelerated Math, Accelerated Reading and Terrific Kids

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### **Injury**

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If a student is injured, the student is sent to the office. If it is a head injury the parent is always called. Depending upon the seriousness of the injury, a parent may be called and an accident report may need to be filed in the office by RCA staff. The school carries insurance that covers only the unpaid deductible and any co-pays. If your child needs that assistance from an accident where medical attention is required, please notify the school leader as there is only a 90-day window in which to file paperwork.

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### **Internet Access**

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*See Email, Technology*

Internet access will be available within the school. All users will be required to fill out and submit a Technology Use consent form. This form will be signed by the parent and student. Once this form is signed, the student will be able to access the Internet. The Internet will be used as a tool for school projects and research and will be subject to close supervision by RCA staff. Refer to STU017 – Technology Acceptable Use Policy.

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### **Last Day of School**

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The last day of school is a day of celebration for all students. The staff plans activities that are age appropriate for K-1-2, 3-4, and 5-8. Transportation may or may not be available. Groups need to submit their requests to the Chief Academics Officer.

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### **Library Books/Videos**

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Students receive a weekly visit to the library for about a 30-minute period. The students are allowed to check out two books and one video. If the student does not return their books and/or video, then he/she cannot check out another one until they are returned. Be sure the student takes the library book to the library during their library time. We realize that children can easily lose things; however, books can be expensive so if you cannot find it when notified it is missing, we will give you an option of paying for the book or video.

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**Lice**

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Regardless of how clean a person is, anyone can catch head lice. Head lice spread very easily and can cause a lot of trouble and upset for children and families. Students cannot be singled out. The only way head lice can be detected is if all students in a classroom are checked through a periodic health clinic inspection or if the student complains about itching or mentions lice. If you discover lice or nits on your child, please contact us so that we can check other students and prevent spreading it. A phone call will be placed to the parent of the student(s) asking them to pick up their child(ren) who has head lice, with the following directions:

- To visit the Health Clinic the next day for confirmation of treatment and to have their child(ren)'s head checked for possible nits or nymphs (louse).
- Nits closer than ¼" from the scalp means the child cannot stay at school that day; nits more than ¼" from the scalp means the child may stay at school because it indicates an old infestation.
- Any adult lice will mean the child cannot stay at school that day

Child(ren)'s heads will be inspected each and every day until the nits or adults are gone.

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**Lunch**

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*See Textbook Fees, School Breakfast, Lunch and Milk*

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**Medication**

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There are three kinds of medications. One requires parent/guardian completion of a form regarding administering prescription and non-prescription medication at school while another allows students to bring medication from home to be self-administered. Prescription medications must be delivered in the original container by the parent/guardian with the appropriate paperwork. Non-prescription medication must also be accompanied by a note allowing the school to administer non-prescription medications. Both of these medications must be locked in the clinic. Some medications, such as inhalers, can be kept with the student and used at the student's discretion.

Students must return a student information sheet filled out and signed by the parent at the start of the school year. This is a communication tool to allow us to know if your child has an allergy or takes prescription medications.

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**Milk**

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*See Textbook Fees, School Breakfast, Lunch and Milk*

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**Mission Statement**

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*See Part I. Topics. Purpose of the School, Vision Statement, Belief Statement*

Rural Community Academy staff will give the students the opportunity to reach his or her greatest potential personally and academically with small class sizes in a rural setting with active parental involvement, supported with the people, places and things of the community incorporating partnerships and a focus on giving back to their community.

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**National Junior Beta Club**

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*See Beta Club*

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**Neewollah**

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Known in most schools as a Fall Festival, Neewollah (Halloween spelled backwards) is a festival about family sponsored by the Eagles Club. Students earn incentive tickets through school incentives and

playing free classroom games throughout the evening, placing their tickets where they wish to win prizes. Parents can also play or can enjoy some of the adult entertainment such as the popular musical chairs or purchasing tickets to win big baskets. All funds go to benefit the parent-teacher organization. The community organization, TTYF offers food (soup, sandwiches, drinks, desserts) for sale as a fundraiser for their organization. All in all, it is an evening of food and fun, always held the Friday after Halloween.

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## **Notes to School**

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### Limitations on Physical Activity

If a child is sick or injured, please send a note explaining why he or she cannot participate in recess or physical education. Otherwise, we will expect full participation at all times. Children excused from P.E. will need a doctor's note after one week. Children are expected to participate in all recess and physical education activities and should be dressed appropriately according to the weather as many activities are held outside.

### Medication

A medication form is required before prescription medication can be brought to school. Prescription medication must be in the original bottle with the prescription label intact. All medicine must be kept in the clinic.

### Medical Conditions

If a student has a medical issue that requires any special considerations such as bathroom breaks, food allergies, etc, a doctor's note is required.

### Absences

A note from a parent is required when a child is absent—whether excused or unexcused.

### Transportation

If your child does not normally ride the bus or is to be dropped off with someone else, a note or phone call from a parent is required. A note from a parent is required before a student is eligible to ride a bus home with another student.

### Pick Up

In order to keep your child safe, a note is required from a parent if the child is to be picked up by someone not on your pick up/drop off list.

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## **NWEA**

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The Northwest Evaluation Association has an assessment tool that is required by Ball State University. This computer assessment with immediate results shows student academic growth that is a measurement of the success of the student and the school.

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## **Open House**

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In the first part of the year, there is an Open House so that parents can come in and meet their child(ren)'s teacher(s) and the Administration

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## **Organizational Chart**

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An organizational Chart appears on the last page of this document.

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**Parent Rights**

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*See Teacher Rights, see Parent Grievance Procedure at end of Handbook*

Parents have the right to discuss concerns with RCA staff. At RCA, the staff is expected to act professionally and fairly when addressing all concerns. As a result, they will use their professional judgment to make decisions to ensure all students are receiving a quality education. In fairness to the employee, problems should not be casually discussed with other parents in the school, but should be dealt with one on one.

If a parent has a problem with a teacher:

Step One—talk to the teacher; there are always two sides to every story; then draw a conclusion

Step Two—if a parent is not happy with the teacher’s response, please see the Chief Academics Officer who is the supervisor of the teacher and explain your concern.

Step Three—if a parent is not happy with either the teacher’s response or the response of the Chief Academics Officer, then go to the School Leader

Step Four—write your concerns and hand to the School Leader who is required to send your concern to all members of the Board of Directors who will determine resolution.

If a parent concern is not being met, the parent may follow a Parent Grievance Procedure that is set up for major concerns by the parents:

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**Parent-Teacher Conferences**

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*See Grading and Report Cards, Contact Us*

We believe that parents and teachers should work together for the benefit of the child. Of course, at any time parents are welcome to contact teachers (and vice-versa) to discuss a child. We believe it is important to set aside time after the first nine weeks and the third nine weeks to schedule times for parents and teachers to meet to determine a child’s progress. . We believe Kindergarten students would benefit from a conference between the teacher and the parent once each semester to determine academic and personal achievements. Specific parent-teacher conferences for all students are not set aside because the student is performing well. You will be contacted by the school if your child needs a parent-teacher conference. Conferences are available at the request of a parent at any time during the school year. Please do not hesitate to call or email. Some parents may find it helpful to write questions down before coming to a conference.

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**Parties, Class and Other**

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Each class has a parent representative. The teacher will work with the parent representative for their class for all the holiday parties. Parent representatives will also be notified of a food allergy in your classroom so that food item will not be served.

Parents should be able to open their child’s homework folder and only see things that pertain to the school. Social parties that involve multi-level selling for Sentsy, Sophia Lia, Thirty-One, etc., do not belong in your student’s homework folder. The school may be involved in some kind of school fundraiser that requires information to be sent home to parents, but not any staff member’s personal party or a parent’s personal party.

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**Parking**

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*See Student Drop Off and Student Pick Up*

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**Physical Education Shoes**

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Do not physically hug or pick up children other than your own.

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**Physical Education Shoes**

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Students must have a set of PE shoes specifically for the gymnasium to protect the new floor.. PE shoes also should be worn outdoors for PE activities. The logical thing is that a pair of PE shoes remain at school specifically for the gym and on the days a student has PE. Boots will not be allowed on the gym floor for Physical Education activities. Any student who forgets their other PE gym shoes that they are to leave at the school will be given a disciplinary slip.

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**Pick Up, Student**

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*See Student Pick Up*

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**Pictures**

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Parents complete an Information Sheet when they enroll their student and each year what you have marked the previous year is available for change. This Information Sheet asks you if you object to your child’s picture or image to be utilized for marketing purposes for the school. The students do many activities and hundreds of digital pictures are taken of classes and students. The school web site, newspapers, radio, television and other advertising are just ways we promote the school. You choose on your Information Sheet which—all, any or none—that you prefer for your student. The school will not utilize social networking and will not promote your student’s picture or image.

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**Piercings**

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*See Dress Code/Piercings/Tattoos*

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**Place-Based Curriculum**

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“Place” in place-based curriculum is the actual place where we live. We happen to think that we live in a wonderful place with a neat environment, history, and culture, and we want our kids to learn about it and appreciate it too. We want them to learn how to live well here, be proud of living in a rural area, and not be embarrassed because some people still think that “country folk” are not smart. The more kids learn about where they come from, the more likely they are to either stay in their communities and keep them going, or if they do move away, they will be better citizens wherever they settle down. The school campus, the fields, Fast Jack’s, the post office, Merom Bluff, and nearby creeks and the river are just some of the local places that will be used to teach our students. Teachers are encouraged to take advantage of local places to teach math, science, and history. Local places may be the topic of a writing assignment or an art project. The possibilities are endless!

“Place” also means local community members. We have some very talented and knowledgeable people in our community who have a lot to offer our students. We have local historians, scientists, artists, quilters, nurses, business people, farmers, world travelers, musicians, and so on who will be asked to come in and help teach our kids. Students may also be paying some of these folks a visit to interview them or learn more about their profession. We want and need local community members and parents not only as resources, but also as partners in teaching our kids by volunteering at the school and supporting us.

Finally, “place” also means the community itself. Part of the class work may involve students looking at what our community needs and how they can make it better. For example, they might collect

stories, statistics, and information from the community and then create projects and presentations that will in turn benefit the community.

So, don't be alarmed if you drive by the school and see a 2nd grade class walking around the front lawn looking up in the trees, the 4th grade class digging and planting native Indiana plants by the garden pond, and the 7th graders packing up their gear to head to a creek to do water quality testing. Learning is happening.

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**Playground Rules**

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*See Rules—Playground*

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**Progress Reports**

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*See Grading and Report Cards*

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**Purpose of the School**

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*See Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Belief Statement*

The purpose of Rural Community Academy is to provide students with a top-quality educational program using a place-based approach. With careful attention to the social dynamics and cultural values of the rural setting, the Rural Community Academy seeks to instill students with self-confidence, practical skills, pride of place, and excellent academic abilities through differentiated instruction, strong parental support, and continuous interaction with the local community. Students will be equipped to excel in their academic, personal, and social lives long after their attendance at this school.

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**Reading Buddies**

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The place-based curriculum lends itself well for younger students to read to older students and for older students to read to younger students. Of course, all students are supervised.

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**Recess/Social Time**

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K-2 recess times

11:20-11:40

3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade recess times

11:55-12:15

5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade social time

Lunch for 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade is at 12:16 pm with social time at 12:36 pm.

Please make sure the student is dressed appropriately for outside recess. If there is any precipitation such as rain or snow, the students will not go outside regardless of the temperature. Recess/social time will be held outdoors if the weather is 20 degrees or higher, including wind chills, as determined by [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com). This decision was based on Indiana Department of Education's recommendations as well as researching other school district procedures in the State of Indiana. If the student cannot go out due to an illness, please bring the student to the office.

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**Report Cards**

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*See Grading and Report Cards, Parent-Teacher Conferences*

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**Retention**

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No one wants to retain a student but sometimes it is the best thing for a student in order to allow him or her a second chance to learn basic skills. Basic skills are required as a basis to build upon. Sometimes it takes students a little longer to grasp a concept. The teacher should acknowledge

concerns during the school year so that it is not a surprise to the parent. The teacher should make the retention known to the parent during the enrollment period beginning March 1 of each school year. Parents need to do their part by attending conferences and by being aware of their child's grades and struggles as they do homework at home. It is equally important for a parent to contact the teacher if concerns arise.

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### **Rules—Cafeteria**

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These rules are part of the review that needs to be discussed with your child:

- Display proper manners.
- Use your quiet voice at all times in the cafeteria.
- Don't run.
- Remain seated at your table until an adult dismisses you.
- Clean up your eating area and put things where they need to go.
- Be courteous to all others in the cafeteria.
- Do not touch or eat the food of others.
- Don't throw food anywhere expect in the appropriate receptacles.

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### **Rules—Classroom**

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These rules are determined by the staff members working with your child but also include general School Rules

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### **Rules—Playground**

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These rules are part of the review that needs to be discussed with your child:

- No pushing, hitting, wrestling, or fighting-type activities are allowed at any time, inside or outside. Students are expected to participate in approved game activities.
- Students will stay within the boundaries of the playground and in sight of the duty adult. If a ball goes off the playground, it is to be reported to the adult in charge.
- Students will not be allowed off the playground to retrieve equipment unless under the direction and visual supervision of an adult.
- Students will play with all playground equipment appropriately. Do not throw balls at the buildings, windows, roof, or other children in such a way as to cause injury or damage.
- Hard balls, tackle football, and rough housing are not allowed.
- Do not bounce balls inside the building.
- Students are to stay out of water puddles and off icy patches.
- Swings—no jumping off swings; no under pushes; no pushing swings; no swings thrown over top bars; no climbing on top bars.
- Use toys for their intended purposes, (ex: jump ropes)
- Teeter-Totter—one on each end; no huge bounces—do not jump off without consulting with your partner.
- Slides—climb on ladder only.
- Climbing equipment—no climbing on top bars.
- Merry-go-Round—stop/near stop before jumping off.
- Do not play in the rocks and do not throw rocks.

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### **Rules—School**

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These rules are part of the review that needs to be discussed with your child:

- Keep your hands (feet, head, arms, etc.) to yourself and keep everything in your hands to yourself (rocks, pencils, etc.)

- During classroom situations, students should raise their hand to speak so that everyone will not be speaking at the same time.
- When the teacher is giving instructions, making a presentation, or the class is engaged in discussion, students should be in their designated area paying attention.
- Students are not allowed to run in the hallways or on the stairways.
- Students should keep their hands to themselves at all times unless directed otherwise by an adult. (i.e.: physical education activity, art project, drama, etc.) No touching in any manner includes boy and boy, girl and girl, girl and boy, also includes air hugs.
- Student horseplay will not be tolerated in the building or on school grounds at any time. For example, no shoving, pushing, tripping, hitting, wrestling, throwing of objects, spitting, kicking, biting, etc.
- Students will not use profanity or inappropriate language.
- Students must be obedient and respectful of all adults and staff authority at all times.
- Students should be kind, courteous, respectful, and friendly to other students.
- Students are expected to complete schoolwork on time unless there is an excused absence. Staff will give extra time for completion of homework when a student has an excused absence—one additional day to turning homework for each day of excused absence. Students with unexcused absences are also required to make up work missed. Unexcused make-up work will receive up to 50 per cent credit.
- Students are not allowed to damage (i.e.: writing, tearing, scratching) textbooks, desks, or any other school property.
- Students are not allowed to chew gum in the building during the school day.
- Students are not allowed to purchase from the vending machine during the school day
- Students are not allowed to leave the school grounds at any time.
- Students may be suspended or expelled from school when state statutes have been violated. (i.e.: refer to weapons, drug, and bullying policies).
- At dismissal each grade level is to report to their designated area and remain there until dismissed by the teacher.

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### **Rural Community Schools, Inc. (RCSI)**

*See General Membership Meeting*

RCSI is a not-for-profit organization that operates establishments such as, but not limited to, charter schools or study centers, that the Corporation or its Board of Directors deem beneficial to the educational enhancement for the people of Sullivan and surrounding counties. This organization includes the Board of Directors of the school.

Every parent and employee of the Rural Community Academy are automatically members of the Rural Community Schools, Inc. They are always welcome to the regular Board meetings and especially encouraged to attend the annual meeting held in May at which Board members are elected.

Other interested community members, grandparents or others may apply for membership. Applications for membership may be picked up in the school office or at the school's website [www.rcsi.k12.in.us](http://www.rcsi.k12.in.us). Membership fees for these individuals are \$10 annually with a \$5 first-time application fee. The RCSI Board of Directors includes Meleah Sullivan, President, Paul Fathauer, Vice-President, Debbie Okes, Secretary, Brian Ketterer, Treasurer, and Amanda Estey, Member.



**School Breakfast, Lunch and Milk      USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer**

*See Textbook Fees, School Breakfast, Lunch and Milk*

<b>Students Full</b>	<b>Students Reduced</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Staff</b>
\$1.55	\$.30	Hot Breakfast*	\$1.80
\$2.80	\$.40	Lunch	\$3.30
N/A	N/A	Sides	\$ .50
N/A	N/A	Main	\$1.75
Salads will be part of a student's lunch when served		Small Salad	\$1.50
		Large Salad	\$2.00
		Salad Bar	\$2.5
N/C	N/C	Cheese Sandwich	N/A

*\*Breakfast will not be served if there is a two-hour delay because of inclement weather.  
A cold breakfast will be served with a one-hour delay.*

We are very proud to be able to offer students opportunities for a school breakfast and lunch. Our new kitchen has allowed us to enter the National School Lunch Program which sets nutritional guidelines and allows families who meet income guidelines of the Free and Reduced Breakfast and Lunch program to qualify for free or reduced breakfast and lunch. In order to receive free and reduced meals, parents will be required to complete an application that will be approved or your students may be approved by direct certification. Direct certification is obtained from the state when a family is receiving any type of state assistance. These families will be notified at the start of school and no application is necessary.

Students who do not qualify for the free breakfast or lunch program will make deposits to their cafeteria account as they chose. These payments will be made to the office before school anytime during the week.

Some students may wish to bring a sack lunch to school. A refrigerator is not available to any student so lunch with an ice pack is recommended. Microwaves are available for reheating food items only—not cooking items such as frozen dinners or roman noodles; these items can be cooked at home and then re-heated at the school. Students are not allowed to purchase soft drinks from the vending machine during school hours. The student who does not purchase a school breakfast and lunch will be charged for their milk or juice.

Since the school campus is closed, children are not eligible to leave to go purchase a lunch. In the event your child who is not on the free breakfast or lunch program forgets to bring a lunch, a cheese sandwich will be provided. If your child often utilizes this service, you will be called to determine why your child is not bringing or purchasing lunches.

Whenever a student purchases lunch or milk in the cafeteria the amount will be deducted from their account. Parents will be notified whenever the student's account is low on funds. No more than \$5.00 can be charged before the account will be considered closed until money is sent to pay the overdue amount and money for future lunches or milk.

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**School Calendar**

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The calendar is designed to give students 180 days of classroom instruction. The school year at the Rural Community Academy has been designed to correspond closely with the calendars of other county school corporations.

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**School Day/Hours**

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The instructional day will begin at 8:00 a.m. A student will be considered tardy if he or she is not in the classroom by 8:00 a.m. Students will attend until 3:15 p.m. daily. If students leave early for an appointment, the student will not qualify for perfect attendance or Eagles Endeavor. RCA's instructional minutes exceed the state mandated number of minutes per day. Office hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

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**School Closing**

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*See Closing/Inclement Weather*

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**School Reach**

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The school has purchased a software program that will allow us to send phone and email messages as reminders of important dates, activities or exceptions from the school days such as delays or early dismissals.

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**School Rules**

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*See Rules—School*

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**School Web Site**

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*See Harmony*

The web address for the school's web site is [www.rcsi.k12.in.us](http://www.rcsi.k12.in.us). You will find a lot of information, pictures, policies, etc. in addition to the student management software system called Harmony.

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**Snack Time**

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*See Allergens and Irritants*

Grades K-2 have snack time according to the teacher's schedule and parents are responsible to provide the snacks. Students will not be punished or admonished for failure to bring snack items per the teacher schedule. If a family has a problem meeting their schedule, the parent can contact the school leader who will assist.

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**Special Education and Useful Terminology**

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All students have weaknesses and strengths. Any child who does not learn/walk/talk as everyone else is called an Exception Learner and may benefit from special education services to help them become the best they can be. This includes students who are gifted and have areas in which they excel beyond the traditional curriculum provided by a grade level.

The fundamental principle of inclusive education is the valuing of diversity within the human community.... When inclusive education is fully embraced, we abandon the idea that children have to become "normal" in order to contribute to the world.... We begin to look beyond typical ways of becoming valued members of the community, and in doing so, begin to realize the achievable goal of providing all children with an authentic sense of belonging. (Tomko, 1996). Rural Community Academy believes in this philosophy of inclusion. The goal of inclusion is achieved only when a child

is participating in the activities of the class, as a member who belongs, with the supports and services they need.

Useful Terminology includes:

- Special Education – Specifically designed instruction that meets the unusual needs of an exceptional student.
- Exceptional Learner – Those who require special education and related services if they are to realize their full human potential.
- Giftedness – Intellectual superiority, creativity, and motivation of sufficient magnitude to set the child apart from the vast majority of age-mates.
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – An educational setting or program that provides a student with disabilities the chance to work and learn to the best of his or her ability. The LRE provides the student with as much contact as possible with children without disabilities while meeting all the child's learning needs and physical requirements.
- Inclusion – Inclusion is a term which expresses commitment to educate each child to the maximum extent appropriate in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend. It involves bringing the support services to the child (rather than moving the child to the services) and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class (rather than having to keep up with the other students).
- Accommodation/Modification – Reasonable changes to accommodate needs of students with disabilities in general education classrooms.
- Adaptation – A modification to the delivery of instruction or method of student performance that changes the content or conceptual difficulty of the curriculum.
- IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Act (1997) - A law that guarantees a free and appropriate public education to individuals with disabilities ages 3 through 21 that need special education and/or related services.
- Individual Education Program (IEP) – A written education plan for a student with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21. The IEP is developed by a team of professionals (teachers, therapists), the child's parents, and the child when appropriate. An IEP is based on a multidisciplinary evaluation of the child; it describes how the child is presently doing, what the annual goals for the child are, what the child's learning needs are, what services the child will need, and where the services will be offered. The IEP is reviewed and updated yearly. IEPs are required by IDEA.

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**Sports**

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*See Extra Curricular Activities*

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**Sports Banquet**

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All basketball players (girls and boys) and cheerleaders, archery and dance team, along with their families, are invited to an award night where the family joins together with the staff to honor the student's participation.

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**Spring Music Show**

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Parents and community members are invited to attend an all-school evening event showcasing our music program and the student talent as RCA gives back to the community. In the event the required garment is not something that you can acquire, please contact the School Leader for assistance.

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**Staff**

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*See Contact Us*

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**Student Council**

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Homeroom teachers, along with an administrator of the student's choice, will approve students in Grades 5-8 to participate in student council. Council seekers will be selected by the 5th -8th grade student body through an election process including a school speech. They will offer ideas and suggestions for school improvement and can convey those ideas through posters or other marketing techniques.

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### **Student Pick Up**

Please do not pick up students outside their room or on the stairs but in the gymnasium. It is against Fire Safety rules and the teacher must "hand off" students to parents.

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### **Student Drop Off**

Please pull up to the south entrance door where the school is on your right when dropping off students for school. We ask that you do not park at the south entrance in the morning. We want to keep the area clear so that your children are visible and safe. Also, we have an area designated for bus parking. When picking students up in the afternoon, please park near either entrance; however, do not park near the south doors as the bus requires designated parking. The persons responsible for picking up your child(ren), K-6, will need to go the gym where they will be waiting with their class.

The school building is open at 7:30 a.m. All students must report directly to the gymnasium which is supervised by RCA staff. Grades 5-8 may report to their classes when the 7:50 bell rings and are considered tardy if they are not in their homeroom by the 8:00 a.m. bell. K-4th grades remain in the gym until their teacher picks them up at 7:55 a.m.

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### **Student Pick Up**

The instructional day ends at 3:15 p.m. All students in grades K-6 will be taken to the gym by their teachers, who will remain with them until all are picked up from the gym by the appropriate responsible adult. . The students cannot leave their teacher until the teacher has released the students to the proper adult. 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students do not have to report to the gymnasium but are to remain in the building until their ride arrives. Students may be dismissed differently if they are riding the bus. In unusual situations where children are still in the gym at 3:30, they will be taken to the office by their teacher where RCA staff will attempt to contact their families. If parents make changes to pick up during the day, the administration will notify the teacher. A note from a parent is required before a student is eligible to ride a bus home with a person that is currently not designated as a pick up person or with another student.

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### **Tardiness**

When your child arrives late to class, important announcements, instructions and group activities are missed. Each child is an important member of the class and timely and consistent participation makes a difference in what is learned. We encourage you to model the value of promptness as well as the importance of beginning and ending the school day with their classmates. The habits your child develops during these formative years will serve them throughout their lives.

- Students not present in the classroom by 8:00 a.m. are considered tardy
- All students who are tardy to school must report to the main office to sign in.
- Teachers are requested to refer cases of chronic tardiness to administration.
- Tardiness will count against students' citizenship/conduct grade.

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**Tattoos**

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*See Dress Code/Piercings/Tattoos*

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**Teacher Responsibilities**

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Rural Community Academy teachers have several key responsibilities to their students and families, including:

- to inspire and motivate children to a lifetime love of learning
- to be flexible, adaptable, and demonstrate excellent organizational skills
- to be confident and creative as an educator
- to have a strong academic background
- to be approachable and compassionate toward students while being both firm and fair
- to approach and interact with each child as a unique individual, and to meet individual needs
- to give students independence while ensuring that respect for others is maintained and
- to teach responsibility

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**Teacher Rights**

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*See Parent Rights, Parent Grievance Procedure at end of Handbook*

Teachers have the right to:

- expect students to behave properly
- be respected by students, parents, and other staff
- be protected from physical assault and from harm or theft of personal property
- call a parent/teacher conference when necessary

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**Technology**

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*See Email, Internet Access*

Internet access will be available within the school. All users will be required to fill out and submit an Technology Use consent form. Once this form is signed and an email assigned, the staff member will be able to access the Internet. The Internet will be used as a communication and research tool and will be monitored periodically utilizing the Websense software on the server. Students do not have unsupervised computer access after school hours.

Food and drink will not be allowed before, during or after school around any computer equipment—computer lab, notebooks, or classroom computers. It has been determined that computers have been abused from spilled liquids and food particles dropped inside keyboards, requiring repairs and limiting their useful life.

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**Telephone Use**

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*See Electronics, Cell Phones, etc.*

The office phone is to be kept for school business. Students will not be allowed to call home for homework or forgotten items after the first three weeks of school to minimize disruption and to teach responsibility. A discussion of cell phones is in the section “Electronics”. It is obvious that the health and safety of a student takes priority and we will contact the parent if there is something you really need to be notified.

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**Terrific Kids**

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*See Awards, Incentives*

This school-wide incentive program is sponsored by the Kiwanis to reward students for character education. Every month students earn Terrific Kids slips from adults who observe the students exemplifying the character of the month. On the first day of the next month, each student who earned

a slip(s) receive an award and a chance to win the top two awards of a \$5 gift certificate to an area merchant. The character traits are as follows:

August – Friendly	January - Motivation
September – Attitude	February - Helpful
October – Trustworthy	March - Fairness
November – Grateful	April - Effort
December - Compassion	May - Respectful

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### **Textbook Fees**

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*See School Breakfast, Lunch and Milk*

Students will be charged an annual book fee. This amount will change by year and grade. Parents will be notified of this fee by the start of the school year. School fees are due by the end of the first grading period of school. A Free and/or Reduced Application based upon income guidelines is available to determine eligibility for free or reduce prices of textbook. In addition, arrangements can be made to assist in cases of financial hardship.

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### **Title I**

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Title I is a federal program that allows selected staff to provide intervention to students who have been identified by assessments, teacher’s input, test scores that they need assistant in at least one subject area.

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### **Toys/Trading Cards**

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*See Electronics*

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### **Transportation**

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Transportation is limited to specific drop off and pick up points based upon the ability to serve as many students as possible. A transportation form and acknowledgement of STU020 School Bus Safety must be signed by a parent before your child can utilize any transportation services. If parents make changes to pick up during the day, the administration will notify the teacher. A note from a parent is required before a student is eligible to ride a bus home with a person that is currently not designated as a pick up person or with another student.

Currently we operate two school buses. We have community pick up points in Sullivan, Shelburn, Carlisle and Merom

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### **Turman Township Youth Foundation (TTYF)**

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TTYF is a not-for-profit organization that promotes educational opportunities for children, including scholarships. It is the sister organization of RCSI. The Graysville Alumni Association is a part of the TTYF. This organization owns and manages the building and manages the custodial services. Membership fees are \$10 for an individual, \$15 for a family. Lifetime membership is available for \$150.00. Totally supported by fundraisers, TTYF sponsors the Fall Fete, the Holiday Market, a Winter Pancake Breakfast, and prepares and sells the food/drink for the Neewollah and the ballgames.

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### **Unexcused Absences**

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*See Attendance*

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### **Vandalism**

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It is important at RCA that our students learn how to be good neighbors in a community. Part of this is an emphasis on taking care of property belonging to the school or others. RCA will not tolerate intentional damage to school property including, but not exclusive of school equipment, textbooks,

library materials, the garden pond, and school building. Students who vandalize will be subject to disciplinary measures up to and including filing charges with law enforcement.

Depending on the severity of vandalism, consequences may also include restitution for damages and fines, a report to the juvenile authorities of any student whose damage of school property has been serious or chronic in nature, and/or a civil action may be filed in a court of competent authority against parents of a student who willfully destroys RCA property.

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### **Veteran's Program**

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is well known for its rich heritage in honoring our veterans. The public program is presented by the students for any veteran. Join us as you swell with pride as your child entertains you and the community. In the event the required garment is not something that you can acquire, please contact the School Leader for assistance.

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### **Violence and Weapons**

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RCA takes threats of violence very seriously. Any act or threat of violence by or against anyone associated with our school community – including students, employees, parents, suppliers, partners, volunteers or visitors is strictly prohibited. This policy applies to all members of the school community. Students are subject to the STU 010 Weapons policy.

Any use or possession of weapons, whether illegal or not, is prohibited on school property or while on school business. This includes knives, guns, martial arts weapons, or any other object that is used as a weapon. Students possessing weapons could be subject to severe penalty up to, and including, expulsion. Any employee caught possessing a weapon will be disciplined, up to and including termination

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### **Vision Statement**

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*See Purpose of the School, Mission Statement, Belief Statement*

The Rural Community Academy will become a model for others who wish their students to excel in their academic, personal and social lives centered around community, people and place.

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### **Visitors**

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*See Volunteers*

Parents, visitors, and volunteers are welcome. We want to be known as the friendly school where people are acknowledged. To give a sense of serenity, all visitors must sign in at the office and receive a name badge. Those who do not report to the office for the name badge will be considered unauthorized and could create concern for your child's safety.

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### **Volunteer Banquet**

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In the spring, all adult volunteers and their spouses who have donated hours to helping at RCA are honored in an evening where the RCA staff prepares a meal showing appreciation for their efforts.

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### **Volunteers**

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*See Visitors*

Our volunteers are vital to the school's success and the students' learning experience. It is desired that all families donate 20 hours of their time in service of the school each year. This time can be served in many ways from helping in the classroom, recess or lunchroom duty, or ballgames to chaperoning field trips. Time must be documented in the logbook located in the office. A volunteer form can be sent home to parents upon request to log any volunteer hours that are outside of the school day when the

office is not open. Those hours should be returned to the school office so that we may document volunteerism for grants and for Ball State University.

More hours may be served and parents are always welcome to visit their child's classroom. Volunteer time beyond the required 20 hours must also be documented for our records. Volunteer hours are important when requesting grant funds. Any volunteer working with students must have a criminal history check cleared with the school office.

All volunteers or visitors who are in the building from 8 am to 3:15 pm for any other purpose than to drop off or pick up their children are required to first go to the office to sign in upon their arrival. Visitors and volunteers will also obtain a nametag to wear while in the building to be identifiable to any staff member to assure the safety of all children and staff.

The building is locked from the hours of 8 am to 3:15 pm to assure the safety of your children. Doorbells are located on the North and South doors of the building and signal staff in the office. Students are instructed to not open doors to anyone during school hours so the doorbells are part of the safe procedures implemented by administration to assure that no one may enter the building without the knowledge of staff.

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### **Week at a Glance**

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All activities, announcement and specific information from your child's classroom teacher is sent via email on Mondays that have a four days or more of school in a week. If you do not have an email, we will give copies (blue) to your child's teacher to disseminate. On Mondays always check your child's folder or request the information from your child.



## **PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

### **PARENTS**

*Parents have the right to discuss concerns with RCA staff. At RCA, the staff is expected to act professionally and fairly when addressing all concerns. As a result, they will use their professional judgment to make decisions to ensure all students are receiving a quality education. In fairness to the employee, problems should not be casually discussed with other parents in the school, but should be dealt with one on one.*

*If concern is not being met, parent may follow the following procedures, which are set up for major concerns by the parents:*

### **FOLLOWING PROCEDURES RESERVED**

1. If parent feels that the matter has not been resolved through informal discussions, parent should put grievance in writing to the same staff member. The school employee must offer a written response within 5 working days in an endeavor to resolve the matter.

### **STAFF**

*Staff will listen to any complaints or concerns brought forth by parents at a time that is convenient; an appointment may need to be set up. (It is always appropriate to ask another staff member to be present if staff feels meeting will be hostile.) In addition, staff should not feel compelled to take phone calls during the day or at home. Staff should document any conversations with parents that expressed concerns or complaints that are not immediately resolved. Staff should also inform their superiors of the conversation, either in writing or in person.*

*When it reaches a point that a parent concern has gone to another level, staff may follow the following procedures:*

### **FOR MAJOR CONCERNS THAT ARE NOT**

1. Staff should request a grievance in writing from the parent and respond in writing within 5 working days in an endeavor to resolve the matter. If parent provides a written complaint against staff member to administration, staff will be informed and allowed to read the complaint. Staff member may choose to write a written response to complaint to be placed with the complaint. A meeting between the staff member, the parent, and the CAO and COO will be held.

### **BOARD**

*Board should not be involved in any parent, community member, or staff member complaint. A Board member is not to attempt to resolve a concern/complaint from a parent, community member, or staff member but rather to listen respectfully, remain impartial and should ask that the following procedures be followed by parent, community member, or staff member. If a Board member is contacted by a parent, community member, or staff member regarding a concern or complaint, the school leader and the entire board will be notified in writing*

### **INITIALLY RESOLVED ABOVE .**

1. The Board should not be involved at this level.

## **PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE p2**

### **PARENTS**

2. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, parent may raise the matter, in writing, with the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and the Chief Operations Officer (COO). This response may take the form of a letter and/or follow-up meeting of the CAO and/or COO with the parent and staff member within five working days.
3. If the matter is not resolved to parent satisfaction after involvement of CAO and COO and the parent wishes to pursue this matter further, parent should put grievance in writing to the Board of Directors. The Board will formally respond by setting a meeting or taking another course of action within 30 days. If the Board as a whole is convened to address the grievance, all applicable public laws will be followed, including prior notice of an executive session for the hearing. The Board's decision is final.

### **STAFF**

2. Staff member will be informed that a letter of concern was brought forth to the administration. The staff member has the right to write a letter of response to this concern within five working days. The staff member also has the right to request a meeting with the parent and the CAO and/or the COO within five working days. The CAO and/or the COO may require the meeting.
3. Staff member will be notified if a meeting is being called by the Board of Directors and whether or not the staff members is required to attend in regards to a parent complaint towards the staff member.

### **BOARD**

2. The Board should not be involved this level. The Board may be notified by either the CAO or COO based on the seriousness of situation.
3. The Board will determine how the situation will be dealt with and whether or not an executive session will be called and who will attend (parent and/or staff member) and give appropriate notification. The Board's decision is final. The Board will respond to the parent of the concern in writing.

RURAL COMMUNITY SCHOOLS, INC. - ORGANIZATIONAL CHART - 2016-17

